

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are currently pending in the application. Claims 18-24 have been withdrawn from consideration. New claims 28 and 29 are presented for consideration. Claims 10-13 and 15 have been allowed.

The Examiner has taken the position that claims 26 and 27, as added in the October 4, 2005 Amendment, are directed to an invention that is independent from that originally claimed. Additional limitations have been added to claim 26 to avoid any argument that the claims are directed to independent inventions that should not be considered in the same application. Consideration of amended claims 26 and 27 is requested.

Claims 1-9, 14, 16, 17 and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over JP 2708717 (APA), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,176,583, to Schanin et al (Schanin), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,733,399 (Wood).

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-9, 14, 16, 17 and 25, consideration of claims 26 and 27 and new claims 28 and 29, and allowance of the case are requested.

Independent claims 1 and 26 have been amended to clarify that the formation of the first and second belt/belt sleeve components occurs separately to avoid any ambiguity in the claim language. The Examiner argued that in the absence of this limitation, the claimed method is similar to a conventional method wherein components are built up serially upon a molding drum. While Applicant does not agree, appropriate amendment has been made to advance prosecution.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-9, 14, 16, 17 and 25, consideration of claims 26 and 27, and allowance of the case are requested.

The additional claim fee of \$100.00 is enclosed. Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge our deposit account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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